Tourism, Culture and Recreation
May 7, 2008

The following statement was issued by the Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. It was also read in the House of Assembly:

Minister Notes Milestone in Filmmaking Industry

I rise in this Honourable House today to acknowledge a milestone in the history of filmmaking in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Down to the Dirt", a film which was written, directed and produced in this province, will be featured at the 61st Cannes Film Festival as part of Telefilm Canada's *Perspective Canada* screening series. It is one of only 10 Canadian films to be selected for this series.

"Down to the Dirt" is based on a novel by local author, actor and playwright, Joel Hynes – who also stars in the film. I had the pleasure this past weekend of joining acclaimed filmmaker Gerry Rogers in presenting Mr. Hynes with the Artist of the Year Award at the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Arts Awards. I take this opportunity to congratulate him once again, and to further extend sincere congratulations to the film's producer, Anna Petras, and director Justin Simms, who also co-wrote the screenplay with Sherry White.

This is the first Newfoundland and Labrador feature film to screen during the Cannes Film Festival's 10-day film marketing event, the *Marché du Film*. "Down to the Dirt" will screen twice during that May 14-23 event, which is attended by 10,500 market participants, 3,000 members of the press, and another 20,000 exhibitors, filmmakers, celebrities, and film buffs from around the world.

This will be incredible exposure for this film, these filmmakers, and for the Newfoundland and Labrador film industry.

The inclusion of "Down to the Dirt" at this prestigious international festival speaks to the talent and creativity of our artists and, just as importantly, to the further potential of this emerging industry in this province.

Our government recognizes the important social and economic contribution that the local film industry brings to the province. We were pleased to provide support for this particular film, and for the marketing effort in Cannes.

Since 2003-04, local film production activity has averaged about $10 million annually. Cultural industries employ about 7,000 people throughout the province and generate about $400 million to the local economy each year.

We believe the film industry will grow – and the more we do, the more we develop a skilled group of professional people (from filmmakers, to set designers, to costume designers, carpenters, and more) to sustain this industry into the future.

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